Hefner Drug Probe Is Dropped by U.S.

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CHICAGO, Dec. 30—The Government has dropped its 15-month investigation of Hugh Heffner and his Playboy empire due to lack of evidence of illicit drug activities.

Heffner and several top associates became the subjects of a federal narcotics investigation after the government received reports that drugs were being distributed within Playboy clubs.

Some reports said visitors to Hefner's two mansions, one here, and the other in Beverly Hills, Calif., were provided with drugs.

U.S. Attorney Samuel K. Skinner said Monday, after announcing that the investigation was dropped, that Hefner "can't be made responsible for what everyone who comes into the place (mansion) does."

"There was simply no evidence that Hefner or any of his senior officials were using any cocaine or hard drugs, or that they were knowingly allowing it to be used in the mansions."

Skinner and Peter Vaira, chief of the Justice Department strike force here, said the Playboy Corp. was adversely affected by publicity concerning the investigation, and for that reason he was announcing an end to the probe.

The Playboy investigation followed the conviction of Bobbie Arnstein, 34, Hefner's social secretary, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison after being convicted of conspiring with a boyfriend and another man to distribute cocaine. She subsequently died of a drug overdose.